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SIPDIS

NSC FOR JEFF HOVENIER

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: FINLAND: AFGHANISTAN CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE
PAKISTAN DONORS' CONFERENCE

REF: A. (A) SECSTATE 31102
[1](#)B. (B) SECSTATE 32712
[1](#)C. (C) SECSTATE 29482

Classified By: Polchief Scott A. Brandon for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Polchief met with Johan Schalin, MFA Director for Asia and Oceania, on April 8 to discuss specific contributions to Afghanistan (REF A) and Finland's participation in the April 17 Pakistan donors' conference (REF B). Schalin began by stressing that the Administration's white paper (REF C) received a very positive reaction within the Finnish Government (GOF), and stating that Afghanistan was his top priority. He said that the Administration's requests for contributions for Afghanistan and Pakistan come at an opportune time, as the Foreign Ministry is commencing its internal consultations regarding the next budget and will consider what more Finland can contribute. (NOTE: Schalin added that the Finance Ministry will take up budget questions this summer, and the budget will go the Parliament in December. END NOTE.) Regarding contributions for either country in the short term, Schalin said he could offer no good news. He said all requests would be considered "sincerely, within budget constraints."

[1](#)2. (C) Schalin said that Finland would not announce any donations at the Pakistan conference. He said that Pakistan was the "odd man out" in terms of Finnish development policy, and that given how the government structured development assistance there was no money to reprogram and direct to Pakistan. (NOTE: Schalin said that through the International Red Cross Finland has provided support - financial assistance, civilians and equipment - for a field hospital in Pakistan. END NOTE.)

[1](#)3. (C) The lack of a contribution for Pakistan, coupled with the fact that it has not been a recipient of significant prior assistance, might explain the composition of the Finnish delegation to the conference. The GOF will send Schalin's deputy, Rauli Suikkanen, to the conference. Schalin said their participation was at a "lowish" level, but he added that Suikkanen's presence would be important for a future review of assistance for Pakistan, as Suikkanen's portfolio includes assistance.

[1](#)4. (C) Regarding Afghanistan, Schalin pointed to the GOF's prior decision to increase its military, civilian and development assistance. That includes the temporary addition of 100 troops to support security arrangements for the elections; a plan to increase OMLT trainers; a planned doubling of police trainers to the EUPOL mission to approximately 18-20 by summer; 500,000 euros to UNDP for election support; and an increase in overall development assistance by one million euros annually from 2009-2013,

bringing assistance up to 16 million euros by 2013. Schalin said Finland would not provide additional contributions in the short term. He said they would examine the specific requests directed at Finland, including for civilian and technical experts to build capacity in Afghan institutions. Regarding the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, Schalin said that Finland currently provides over half of the 10 million USD requested, and said that under current projections their contribution would eventually approach 10 million USD.

BUTLER